

Disclosed are methods of inhibiting desiccation of cuttings from ornamental plants, methods of harvesting cuttings from ornamental plants, methods of promoting early flowering of ornamental plants, and methods of enhancing the longevity of flower blooms on ornamental plant cuttings. The ornamental plants can be transgenic plants which express a heterologous hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide or the ornamental plants can be treated via topical application with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide. Alternatively, cuttings from the ornamental plant can be treated with a hypersensitive response elicitor protein or polypeptide, independent of any treatment provided to the ornamental plant from which the cutting is removed.